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**EOEEA Presents Marine Environment Visionary Awards**

BOSTON – Secretary of Energy and Environmental Affairs Secretary Ian Bowles today congratulated the Essex County Greenbelt Association and Susan Jones Moses of Rowley, recipients of the Gulf of Maine Council on the Marine Environment's 2007 Visionary Awards.

The Gulf of Maine Council is a US-Canadian partnership of government and non-government organizations that focuses on maintaining and enhancing environmental quality in the Gulf of Maine – a marine resource covering 36,000 square miles of ocean and 7,500 miles of coastline. The Council's annual Visionary Awards go to two individuals, businesses, or organizations within each state or province that border the Gulf (Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Maine, New Brunswick, and Nova Scotia).

This year's awards were announced at yesterday's (6/13) Council meeting in New Brunswick. Andrea Cooper, coastal smart growth coordinator in the Office of Coastal Zone Management, will formally present the Massachusetts awards on behalf of the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs at the Essex County Greenbelt Association's June 18 board of director's meeting in Essex.

"The North Shore of Massachusetts is fortunate to have two outstanding Marine Visionary Award recipients this year. We congratulate both the Essex County Greenbelt Association and Sue Moses for their innovation, creativity, and commitment to protecting our invaluable marine and coastal resources," Secretary Bowles said.

Recognized for her individual contributions, Moses serves as the Essex County Forum's Smart Growth Circuit Rider, a term derived from the Old West – when officials traveled from town-to-town, "riding the circuit" to provide their expertise.

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The Essex County Forum, a program of the Essex County Community Foundation, identifies planning and conservation needs, and helps communities of Essex County work together to promote stewardship of the region's resources and plan for future growth. As Circuit Rider, Moses works with Essex County cities and towns to promote smart growth, water quality improvements, land acquisition and habitat protection. As a volunteer in her community, she has led local efforts to permanently protect hundreds of acres in the Great Marsh watershed.

The Gulf of Maine Council recognized the Essex County Greenbelt Association for its work with local communities, landowners, state agencies and other groups to promote water quality, protect wildlife corridors, and ensure access to high quality outdoor recreational opportunities. Since its founding 46 years ago, Greenbelt has protected more than 12,000 acres throughout the North Shore.

For additional information about the Visionary Awards and previous recipients, see <http://gulfofmaine.org/council/awards.php>. The meeting honoring Moses and the Essex County Greenbelt Association takes place at 7:45 p.m. June 18 at the Cox Reservation, 82 Eastern Ave., Essex, and is open to the public and media.

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